PREFACE

THE first two volumes of my WAR MEMOIRS brought the story up to the end of the Asquith Premiership.

Volumes III and IV tell the story of the part played by the Government of which I was the head, up to the end of 1917.

The tale is one which does not always give me any pleasure to tell; quite the reverse. There is much of it which I wrote with intense reluctance. For I found it necessary in the interests of a truthful record to relate facts which constitute a severe criticism on the action of men whose memory is honoured by their fellow countrymen for many sterling qualities which they possessed in a remarkable degree. My disinclination for revealing to the public unpleasant truths which reflect on distinguished public servants is naturally enhanced by the fact that some of them are no longer present to defend themselves. For that reason I felt disposed to pass on to others the duty of writing the true history of the occurrences recorded in these volumes. But as all these Great War figures had in their lifetime, either themselves or through the agency of authorised substitutes, already given their version of affairs, in which they did not spare those of whom they disapproved—including, nay, especially myself—I felt I was justified in publishing information at my disposal which corrected wrong impressions.

Moreover, I took the view that if you accept the